

NSC BRIEFING

29 October 1958

MIDDLE EAST

Arab-Israeli Tension

- I. Arab-Israeli tension is again building up as date for completion of withdrawal UK troops from Jordan and King Husayn's "vacation" in Europe draws near (about 10 November though troops may be out possibly as early as 2 or 3 November.)
 - A. In Husayn's absence, Jordan will be ruled by three-man regency council reportedly to be composed of weak, moderate nationalists who probably favor establishment of better relations with UAR.
 - B. Israelis have tried to get across idea that if Jordan appeared about to pass under control of elements aligned with UAR, Israel might occupy West Bank.
 1. Israelis justify such action by need to make longest and most vulnerable frontier militarily defensible.
 2. In press interview last Sunday Premier Ben Gurion declared if status quo in Jordan were changed, Israel would demand guarantee of its frontiers by UN and "great powers" and seek UN-enforced demilitarization of West Jordan.
 3. Israel may feel this best assured by seizure West Bank, which could subsequently be evacuated in return for UN guarantee--as happened in Gaza Strip.

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II. Israelis maintaining high state of readiness although no significant buildup evident.

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III. UAR and Iraq have publicly expressed their intentions to assist Jordan in the event of Israeli attack.

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- IV. There is therefore prospect of multilateral dismemberment of Jordan by its neighbors since the Arabs probably could not halt Israeli advance into West Jordan.
- V. UAR has denounced what it judges to be military buildup of Israel by France and Britain, and appears to suspect that West is preparing to support Israeli move into Jordan.
 - A. The UAR is using these claims to justify new round of arms negotiations with Soviet Union, though this actually was begun prior to recent Israeli purchases in West.

Iraq

- I. In Iraq, cabinet changes introducing additional military officers into the government may occur soon.
 - A. Such officers would probably be more conservative than some of the present civilian ministers but would not be likely to favor a pro-Western policy.
 - B. There is still much sympathy for ousted deputy-premier Arif, however, and rioting in Baghdad on 27 October involving his supporters was suppressed by army tanks.

1. Pro-Arif elements expect his "return" on 5 November, and some attempt--demonstration or coup--may occur then.
2. According to Iraqi Embassy spokesman in Bonn, Arif is now in Italy and may arrive in Bonn in 10 days.

Approved For Release 2004/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R00890A001000060010-9

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